

# NEWS RELEASE

# THE LIBERTARIAN PARTY

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## After 125,000 deaths and 400,000 POWs, government admits the War on Drugs is lost

WASHINGTON, DC — It's official: The War on Drugs is over — and the government lost.

That's what the Clinton Administration says in a draft of its 1997 National Drug Control Strategy policy statement, which was obtained last week by the Scripps Howard News Service. The policy statement admits that the War on Drugs is unwinnable, says that the "war" metaphor is unrealistic, and recommends that the government view drugs as a disease.

"Finally, America's longest war is over — at least rhetorically," said Steve Dasbach, Chairman of the Libertarian Party. "After 25 years, the government is finally suggesting that peace with honor is possible for the War on Drugs."

But if the War on Drugs is really over, Dasbach said, the government should . . .

■ **Declare a general amnesty.** "According to a report from the Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services Administration, 36% of Americans have used drugs," noted Dasbach. "No wonder this war couldn't be won: The War on Drugs was really a war on the American people — 94.7 million of them. It's time to let them live in peace."

■ **Send the army home.** "More than 8,000 active military personnel and thousands of National Guard troops are currently engaged in anti-drug missions on U.S. soil," said Dasbach. "In addition, about 19,000 state and local law enforcement officers are assigned full-time to the War on Drugs. It's time to decommission the massive army recruited for this war."

■ **Free the prisoners of war.** "More than 400,000 Americans are currently imprisoned on non-violent drug charges, and that number is growing every year," said Dasbach. "In fact, since 1990, more Americans are being arrested every year for drug crimes than for violent crimes. It's time to release the POWs."

■ **Remember the innocent victims of this war.** "Nobel Prize winner Milton Friedman estimated that drug prohibition causes 5,000 homicides a year," said Dasbach. "This means that the 25-year-long War on Drugs caused 125,000 American casualties — far more than the battlefield deaths of the Vietnam and the Korean wars combined. Do these innocent victims deserve a memorial to their senseless deaths?"

Unfortunately, said Dasbach, Clinton has no intention of *really* ending the War on Drugs.

"The same policy statement which admits the War on Drugs is unwinnable then announces that the politicians will keep fighting it by spending *another* \$16 billion in 1998 on anti-drug efforts," he said. "But there's a better way. The Libertarian Party says: End the War on Drugs — in reality as well as rhetoric. It's time for America to stop the killing, the arrests, and the civil liberties violations. It's time for America to declare a *genuine* Drug Peace."

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